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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE

CHARACTER OF THE GENTLEMAN.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

STUDENTS OF MIAMI UNIVERSITY, OHIO,

ON THE EVENING BEFORE COMMENCEMENT DAY, IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST, MDCCCXLVI.

SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION.

BY FRANCIS LIEBER,

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I. C. Morgan, Printer, Columbia, S. C.

PREFACE.

The students of Miami University, in the state of Ohio, did me the honour of inviting me, during the past summer, to deliver an address on the evening before their Commencement day. I had never visited that teeming region of the spreading West, and gladly accepted the proffered invitation. The address was printed, according to custom, and I was furnished with a liberal supply of copies, not sufficient, however, to satisfy all persons who seemed desirous of perusing it. Repeated propositions to republish it were made, but they would

not have induced me to venture upon a second edition of so fugitive a composition, had not some trustees and many students of our own institution desired me to do it. The request of my young friends, especially, led me to inquire of the publishers, Messrs. Allen, McCarter & Co., whether they would be willing to undertake the publication of so small a work, which, in its nature, can promise but very limited remuneration, if indeed any. They promptly and liberally decided that they would undertake the work, and I now offer the following pages, still called on the title-page an address, but forming in reality an essay. For, in preparing the copy for republication, I have not only felt at liberty to make alterations and many additions, but I have thought it my duty to do so, simply because my composition is now to be read, and not

to be heard, and because I was desirous of rendering it less unworthy of a second issue from the press.

I must beg the reader to keep this fact in mind, should he, in perusing these pages, feel disposed critically to compare the present length of the address with the time which ought in fairness to limit spoken performances of the kind, and possibly to charge me with a failing against which I have a strong aversion—the error of detaining hearers or readers, of speeches, addresses, exhortations, messages and documents, beyond reasonable bounds. No one acknowledges more readily than myself, the inconvenience arising from lengthy lucubrations or unmeasured effusions. They war with a virile style, with vigorous thought and close attention, and carry along in their own enfeebling length the

surest means of unnerving the efficacy they might otherwise have possessed, or of diluting the knowledge they might have conveyed. We must acknowledge that this has become a national, and, I believe, a somewhat serious evil of ours, which it is full time to amend. But, as to the pages I here offer, the reader will consider that although the words still retain the form of addressing hearers, they are in fact an essay, as was stated before, and as such I would hope that it is not too long in proportion to the great importance of its subject-matter, considered as an invaluable element of the high and various civilization, which has become the proud inheritance and responsible talent of the vast family composed by the advanced nations of the Occident.

F. L.

S. C. College, Jan. 1847.

THE CHARACTER OF THE GENTLEMAN.

ADDRESS.

Young Gentlemen,

The very word by which I have the pleasure of addressing you, will form the subject-matter of the address, which, in the spirit of great kindness, you have called upon me, unknown to you as I am, to deliver on this festive day. I tender you my cordial thanks for this proof of your regard; but in doing so, I must remind you that I find difficulties of no common character surrounding me at this moment. My foot treads for the first time the soil of your verdant state; I am unacquainted with what may be peculiar to your society, or characteristical of this your institution. I

thus stand in danger of leading you to the unmarked plains of unprofitable generalities. Let me beg you, therefore, to bear with me, should you consider my subject not sufficiently appropriate for this particular occasion, for which I have selected the Character of the Gentleman. It appeared to me that an inquiry into the proposition, What is the true character of the gentleman, and what rules of action do we derive from the results of this inquiry, might be made useful and instructive to young men who, in receiving a liberal education, are preparing themselves for the most important walks of practical life, or the elevated spheres of literature, eloquence and action.

Young as you are, you must have observed, that the term gentleman, indeed, is used in common intercourse almost unmeaningly, or as a term merely indicating that

we do not mean the opposite — of a negative import, therefore; but that the word gentleman has also come to designate, in a direct and positive manner, a character of high and even lofty attributes, and, at the same time, is employed on occasions apparently much differing in their nature. It is made use of as an incentive in education at home and training at school with those who are yet sporting through the age of boyhood. Every one of us has felt his boyish heart glow more warmly when our parent or teacher said, with smiling approval, You are a little gentleman; and Dr. Thomas Arnold, the solid scholar, wise and loving christian, devoted friend of liberty and great schoolmaster, pronounced it as his highest aim to make the boys and youth entrusted to his care, feel like christian gentlemen. An English writer, to express

most strongly his admiration of Plato's works, says that they are pervaded by a spirit, almost, of a christian gentleman; an officer of the army or navy may be tried for "conduct unbecoming a gentleman"—a charge ruinous to his career, if the court pronounces him guilty; "on the word of a gentleman," is considered among men of character equivalent to a solemn asseveration, and the charge "he is no gentleman," as one of the most degrading that can be brought against a man of education. You would understand me at once as being desirous of conveying a grave idea, were I to say that Socrates, though condemned by vulgar and ferocious envy, died passionless, a philosopher and a gentleman, or that Charles the First, of England, after having long dispensed with veracity, and often stooped to unworthy practices, demeaned

himself, during his trial and on the scaffold, like a gentleman.

We naturally ask, then, what is the meaning of this comprehensive term, and is there any thing substantial in the character which it designates, or is it an idol, arbitrarily set up by fickle Fashion, beside morality, perhaps above religion? Has it become a caricature, however innocent at first, or ought it to be well known and attentively cultivated?

I must not detain you with the well-known etymologies of the word, given among others by Gibbon, nor with its meaning in the English law. Blackstone's Commentaries, or any proper book of reference, will speedily satisfy the curious on this point. Let us rather endeavour to ascertain what is meant at present by those who choose their words with care and

knowledge, when they use the term gentleman in its highest acceptation. I believe it signifies that character which is distinguished by strict honour, self-possession, forbearance, generous as well as refined feelings, and polished deportment — a character to which all meanness, explosive irritableness and peevish fretfulness are alien; to which, consequently, a generous candour, scrupulous veracity, courage, both moral and physical, dignity, self-respect, a studious avoidance of giving offence to others or oppressing them, and liberality in thought, argument and conduct, are habitual and have become natural. Perhaps we are justified in saying that the character of the gentleman implies an addition of refinement of feeling, and loftiness of conduct to the rigid dictates of morality and purifying precepts of religion. It seems to me that we

always connect the ideas of honour, polish, collectedness of mind and liberal disposition with the word gentleman, and feel that its antagonistic characters are—if you permit me, in the spirit of philosophical inquiry, to use words, some of which do not often find a befitting place in a gentlemanly discourse —the clown, the gossip, the backbiter, the dullard, coward, braggart, fretter, swaggerer, bully, ruffian and the blackguard, according to that peculiar attribute of the gentleman, the opposite to which we may be desirous of pointing out in the antagonistic character.

If I use here the word *polish*, I mean, indeed, that urbanity which, in most cases, is the effect of a careful education and choice intercourse, consisting, in other words, in high breeding, but which, nevertheless, may result from native qualities so strong that

subsequent cultivation may become comparatively unimportant. There are native gentlemen, as there are native captains, bards, orators and diplomatists. Whoever has read captain Wilson's account of the Pelew Islands,* will concede that the king Abba Thulle and his brothers, especially Raa Kook, were, in all their nudity and want of acquaintance with white men, as delicately feeling and complete gentlemen as can be found in any nation of long planted civilization; and I have at this moment an old, now departed, negro slave in my mind, whom I have never seen otherwise than obliging, polite, anticipating, dignified, true, and forbearing—in short, a gentleman in his lowly sphere. As a mat-

* Account of the Pelew Islands, composed from the Journals of Captain Henry Wilson, wrecked on those Islands in the Ship Antelope in 1783, by G. Keate, Esq., 4th edition, London, 1789.

ter of course, this can take place by way of exception only; but the more difficult the exception, the more honourable is the instance.

The character of the gentleman produces an equality of social claims and supersedes rank, office or title. It establishes a republic of intercourse, as we speak of the Republic of Letters. Nowhere appears, and indeed can appear, this fact more strikingly than in the messroom of a British regiment where the colonel and the ensign, who, under arms, stand in the relation of the strictest military discipline, meet on the common ground of gentlemanly equality, and freely accord to each other the privileges to which every member of the great commonwealth of comity is fairly entitled. The character of the gentleman passes the bounds of states and tongues, and without enfeebling our love of country (did it so, we would repudiate it,)

gives a passport, acknowledged through the wide domain of civilization. In antiquity, almost everything was circumscribed not only by nationality, but even by the mural confines of the city; in modern times the freemasonry of a liberal education, of good manners and propriety of conduct—in a word, of a gentlemanlike bearing, extends over entire hemispheres. It is a sway which is daily widening. Turkey seems to be now in the very act of giving in her adhesion to the vast community of gentlemanly nations.

In order to place the type of the character, which we are contemplating, more distinctly before your minds, I feel induced to give you the translation of a passage, which I found in a valuable French work, entitled British India in 1843, by Count Warren. The author, a Frenchman, was

educated at Paris, obtained a lieutenancy in a British royal regiment in India, and served there during nine years. My translation is literal, and you will remember that the original was written by a Frenchman—a consideration which gives peculiar force to some parts, and will induce you to make allowance for others on the score of French vivacity. Count Warren, speaking of his colonel and the aid-de-camp of the regiment, says:

"I found in those two men a type essentially English, and, at the same time, a degree of perfection, to which it is, perhaps, not given to Frenchmen to attain. The reader must have seen that I was not disposed to view the defects of English society with too indulgent an eye; I do not compare it, for a moment, with ours, as to engaging qualities—urbanity, kindness,

simplicity, and as to all the delights which can render life happy, such as grace, *bonhomie* and charming manners; but as we do not find the diamond in gold and silver mines, but in the layers of crumbled rocks and coarse sand, so do we find the most perfect type of man buried deep in the rude elements of our neighbours; the perfect English gentleman is the Phœnix of the human species. There is wanting in Frenchmen, to attain to this height, nothing but a more elevated and intense sentiment of personal dignity, a more religious respect for the divine part which the Almighty has vouchsafed to men. There are few, I might say, there is not one among us, who is a hero before his valet-de-chambre or his most intimate friend. However excellent a Frenchman may be in society, before strangers or in the presence of ladies, his

very *bonhomie* causes him at once to lower himself, so soon as he is alone with the friend of his heart, the companion of his studies, the confidant or messenger of his first follies. This results, I shall be answered, from an excess of two good qualities—from our absence of affectation and the gaiety so characteristic of the French temper; but we have also generally the defects of these two qualities—an inclination to let ourselves go without restraint, impurity of thought and conversation,* exaggeration and *harliquinade*,† which we are astonished to meet with at every moment in the gravest men and best minds. The perfect English gentleman never follows solely his impulses,

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* *Grivois* in the original, which is, literally translated, smuttiness.

† *Harliquinade* is in the original; I could not translate it by Buffoonery.

and never lowers himself. He carries conscientiousness and the remembrance of his dignity into the smallest details of life. His temper never betrays him, for it is of the same character with his exterior; his house might be of glass; every one of his acts can bear the broadest light and defy criticism. From this we see that the individual, whom we have delineated, is not a product purely indigenous; he must undergo several transplantations, respire the air of the continent, and especially of France, in order to attain to perfect maturity, and to get rid of certain qualities inherent in the native soil — disdainfulness, prejudices, etc. But, if education, circumstances and travel have favoured this developement, it is of him, above all, that we may say, he is the lord of creation."

The duchess of Abrantes, as enthusi-

astically a Frenchwoman in feeling, opinion, spirit and manners, as ever loved *la belle France*, says, in her memoirs, that she must relate an anecdote of lord Wellington, when fighting against her husband in Spain, "showing him in that favourable aspect, which is really the radiant light surrounding the true English gentleman."*

So far our French authors, the first of whom is right in calling the character, designated the gentleman, a type peculiarly Anglican. It belongs to the English race; nor is it long since it has been developed in its present and important form. Lord Campbell, in his Lives of the Lord Chancellors of England, says that one of the earliest instances of the word gentleman being used in the modern sense, was, when in 1640 the Commons, unwilling to vote

* Vol. 9, page 202, Paris edition of 1835.

supplies to Charles the First, before settling their grievances, although the king had promised to give due consideration to the latter, were told by lord keeper Finch, that they should freely vote the money, for "they had the word of a king, and not only so, but the word of a gentleman."* But so occurs a passage in Shakspeare, "sir, the king is a noble gentleman," and Pistol calls himself, in Henry the Fifth, "as good a gentleman as the emperor." The passage, however, in which the poet seems to approach closest to the modern sense of the word, is that in which Antonio, a merchant, is called "a true gentleman."† Yet, it

* See note to page 561, vol. II, of Lives of the Lord Chancellors. Lord Byron distinguishes in a manner somewhat similar, between nobleman and gentleman, when, in the preface to Marino Faliero, he observes that "it is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman; and, secondly, because he was a gentleman."

† Merchant of Venice, III, 4.

cannot be denied, that throughout Shakspeare's works—that surprising panorama of human life—the term gentleman is almost exclusively used either for nobleman, or a man of the higher classes with polished and graceful manners; or its meaning is in a state of transition between the knight of high and sensitive honour, and the mordern gentleman; but it hardly ever designates the true modern gentleman, although the word occurs nearly five hundred times, according to the laborious concordance, for which the public owe very sincere thanks to our countrywoman, Mrs. Clarke.

You will, of course, not misunderstand the position I have advanced, that the present type of the gentleman is of modern developement and Anglican origin, as if I could mean that there are no true gentlemen in other countries, or that there have

been none in antiquity. All I can wish to convey is, that with other races and at other periods, the character of the gentleman has not developed itself as a national type, and as a readily understood and universally acknowledged aggregate of certain substantial and lofty attributes; nor is there now, in any other language, a word corresponding in meaning to the word gentleman, though all of Latin origin have words of the same etymology. Even in English, the word gentlewoman has not followed, in the modification of its meaning, the corresponding change in the signification of the term gentleman, though the word lady has done so upon the whole. The French word *gentilhomme* has retained the meaning, which we give to the English word cavalier.

Instances of gentlemanliness in antiquity

or with other races, are not wanting. The ancient Dherma Sastra of the Hindoos ordain, that a man who loses a law-suit, shall not be liable to punishment, if in leaving the court, he murmurs or openly rails against the judge—a law, it will be acknowledged, exclusively dictated by a spirit of gentlemanly forbearance. When Lycurgus treated Alcander, who had put out one of his eyes, with forbearance and even confidence, he proved himself a gentleman, as he did towards his nephew Charilaus, under the most tempting circumstances. When Cæsar, after the battle at Pharsalia, burnt the papers of Pompey, which might have disclosed to him the names of all his personal and most dangerous enemies, he acted as a gentleman; if indeed, he did not throw a secret glance at them, which, from the general tenour of his life, I think we have

no right to suppose. Alexander began his career as a high-bred gentleman toward friend and foe, and could never wholly disguise that nature had moulded him for one; but what with withering absolute power, intoxicating victories and riotous intemperance, she was robbed of her fair handiwork. The pages of Prescott impress us with the sad belief that Montezuma was a gentleman, but he was not treated as such; for, the Spaniards, punctiliously courteous among themselves, did not think it necessary to bear themselves as cavaliers, and how rarely as men! toward the "unbaptized rabble." The French officer who, in the Peninsular battle, charged the English commander, but merely saluted him when he found that the latter had only the bridle-arm, and could not fight, was most assuredly a gentleman in the truest

sense. But we speak here of national types, of distinct classes of characters, clearly stamped by an imprint, known and acknowledged by the whole people;* and as to antiquity, we need only remember the scurrilous invectives, with which even the

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* We have a parallel case in the character of the philanthropist. There were mild and charitable persons in antiquity. The account of the Samaritan was felt and understood by every hearer. The ancient Hindoo law-giver, who sublimely commanded: "Be like the sandle tree which sheds perfume on the axe that fells it," was inspired with more than mere philanthropy; yet the type of the philanthropist, that combination of attributes which we associate with the word, is a modern type, and was unknown in antiquity or the middle ages. There would be something strangely odd in speaking of an ancient Roman philanthropist, except it were done for the very purpose of indicating how the individual in antiquity anticipated the character and stood alone in his virtues, now connected with the term philanthropist. The type of the opposition member is another. There were citizens in ancient times, as in the middle ages, who, though opposed to the ruling power, did not brood over sedition or revolt; yet the loyal opposition member is a strictly modern type—a noble and indispensable type, yet fully developed only since the times of George the First.

first orators did not think it beneath them to assail their opponents in the Roman senate or the Athenian ecclesia, to be aware that, in our times, a member would be instantly declared out of order and put down, were he to make use of similar language and resort to equal personalities, even in assemblies in which, to the detriment of public tone and public service, deviations from parliamentary decorum no longer form rare exceptions. Falsehood did not disgrace with the ancients, as it does infallibly with modern free nations.

It does not appear difficult to account for the fact that the peculiar character which we call the gentleman, should be of comparatively late developement, and have shown itself first fully developed with the English people. Each of the various constituents of this character required peculiar

social conditions to come to maturity. The middle ages were at times — though not so often as is frequently supposed — sufficiently favourable to the developement of chivalrous honour under the united influence of an active love of individual independence, and a softening reverence for the softer sex. But one of the pervading characteristics of those angry times, was that of exclusive privilege, contradistinguished from a broad acknowledgment of the rights of all and a willing recognition of humanity in every one — shown even in a graduated duty of allegiance. Medieval liberty was almost always a chartered one, extorted by him who had the power to extort, and grudged by him who had not the power to withhold. Modern liberty, on the contrary, is constitutional, that is, national, recognizing rights in all, covering the land, and compassing

the power-holder himself. That exclusiveness and the constant feuds and appeals to the sword, prevented the growth of the collected calmness, ready forbearance and kind reciprocity, which we have acknowledged as necessary elements of the modern gentleman.

Later periods, especially in the progress of manners in France, were propitious to the developement of refinement and a polished deportment; but it was at the cost of morality, and took place under a daily growing despotism, which in its very nature is adverse to mutual reliance and acknowledgment, to candour and dignity of character, however favourable it may be to stateliness of carriage. Veracity is a plant which grows in abundance on the soil of civil liberty alone. The character of the gentleman, such as we now know and

cherish it, was not therefore fairly developed, before the popular institutions and a broader civil liberty in England added a more general consciousness of rights, with their acknowledgment in others, a general esteem for candour, self-respect and dignity, together with native English manliness and calmness, to the spirit of chivalry which, in some degree, was still traditional in the aristocracy, and to the courtesy of manners which perhaps had been adopted from abroad. The character of the cavalier was essentially aristocratic; that of the gentleman is rather of a popular cast, or of a civic nature, and shows in this, likewise, that it belongs to modern times. The cavalier distinguished himself by his dress —by plume, lace and cut; the gentleman shuns external distinction, and shows his refinement within the limits of plain attire.

The character of the gentleman includes whatever was valuable in the cavalier and the earlier knight, but it stands above him, even with reference to that very element which constituted a chief attribute of the cavalier—to honour. Untarnished honour depends in a great measure upon truthfulness, and it is a cheering fact, that the world has become far more candid within the last two centuries. The details of the history of domestic intercourse, of traffic, of judicial transactions and bribes, of parliamentary procedures, of high politics and international affairs, bear us out in this position, however painfully we may even now, far too frequently, be forced to observe infractions of the sacred law of plain-dealing, religious candour and gentlemanly veracity.

In ascribing greater veracity to the people of free countries in modern times, I may

appear to gainsay other and distinguished writers. Montaigne actually says, that we moderns punish the charge of a lie so severely, which the ancients did not, because we lie habitually much more, and must save appearances. But Montaigne wrote in France, at a very evil period, and we may well ask besides, whether antiquity with all its details was vivid in his mind when he penned that passage. If the position I have advanced be wrong, I have at any rate not hastily come to it. I *am* convinced that there is at present more truth in the intercourse of men, although we speak and write less bluntly. Who has studied history without meeting occasionally with acts of deception, which we find it difficult to understand, because at present, public opinion would frown upon them, and utterly disgrace their authors?

Where so many important qualities and distinct attributes, held in high and common esteem, are blended into one character, we must be prepared to meet with corresponding caricatures and mimicking impersonations of faulty, vicious or depraved dispositions and passions. So is the saint's counterfeit the hypocrite; the patriot is caricatured in the demagogue; the thrifty husband in the miser; the frank companion in the gossip; the chaste in the prude, and the conscientious in the pedantic; the sincere reformer in the reckless Jackobin, and the cautious statesman or firm believer in the necessity of progressive improvement, distrusting abrupt changes, in the idolator of the past and the Chinese worshipper of the forefathers. In a similar manner, we find the sensitive honour of the gentleman counterfeited in the touchy duelist; his

courage by the arrant bully; his calmness of mind by supercilious or stolid indifference, or a fear of betraying the purest emotions; his refinement of feeling, by sentimentality or affectation; his polished manners by a punctilious observance of trivial forms; his ready compliance with conventional forms, in order to avoid notice or giving offence to others, or his natural habit of moving in those forms which have come to be established among the accomplished, by the silly hunter after new fashions, or a censurable and enfeebling love of approbation; his liberality by the spendthrift; his dignity and self-respect by conceit or a dogged resistance to acknowledge error or wrong; his candour by an ill-natured desire of telling unwelcome truths; his freedom from petulance by incapacity of enthusiasm, and his composure by ego-

tism. But these distorted reflections from a deforming mirror do not detract from the real worth and the important attributes of the well-proportioned original; nor can it be said that this character has been set up as a purely ethical model in spite of religion. I am convinced that it was possible to conceive this character in its fulness, only by the aid of christianity, and believe—I say it with bowing reverence—that in him to whom we look for the model of every perfection, we also find the perfect type of that character which occupies our attention.

It seems then plain, that in placing before us the character of the gentleman as one of the models of excellence, we do not allow the nimble hand of *neomaniac* fashion to substitute a puny idol, decked with tinsel imitations of substantial gold, for the true

and lasting patterns of virtue and religion; nor can you fail to perceive the vast practical importance of an active, ready, inward gentlemanliness, from which a gentlemanlike conduct as naturally results, as the spontaneous effect from any living, healthy organism.

In all spheres of our lives there occur many acts of so complex a nature, that, if they are submitted to a long process of reasoning, which possibly may appear the more impartial, the more heartlessly it is undertaken, they will allow of a perplexing number of arguments, for and against, of bewildering precedents on either side, and of distinctions more embarrassing than unravelling, so that in the end we see our way less clearly than at the beginning—acts, from which, nevertheless, a mind instinct with genuine gentlemanliness will

shrink at once, as being of doubtful candour, dangerous to honour, of suspicious honesty, or inclining to what is illiberal or undignified. No merchant or artizan, no advocate, statesman, teacher or minister—no citizen, in whatever circle he may move—none of you in your preparatory spheres, can avoid being called upon promptly to decide in cases of this nature. Acts, somewhat tinctured with what we would call unhandsome, or slightly tainted with what may be mean, cannot always be distinctly discerned as such by the reasoning faculties, and all these acts are nevertheless dangerous, because they are infusions of impurity into our soul, where nothing is at rest, but every thing, good or evil, is in constant perfusing and assimilating activity—a psychological law which is subject to far fewer exceptions, if any,

than the corresponding law of assimilation of matter in the animal body.

History is full of these instances; daily life surrounds us with them, and although the pure principles as well as precepts of religion are invaluable, and of primordial importance to all ethic vitality, and for which indeed you can find no substitute, search where you may, yet a keen and instinctive sense and glowing love of honour, watchful and prompt self-respect, and habitual recoiling from what is low, vulgar, coarse and base in thought, feeling, deed or manner, form an active moral co-efficient, or, if I may say so, an additional faculty quickly to receive impressions, upon which religious consciousness decides and works.

Young gentlemen, a clear and vigorous intellect is, in the perception and application

of moral truths, as important as in any other sphere of thought or action, but the general state of the soul and the frame of mind are of greater importance, while no one will deny that gentlemanship, taken in the sense in which the word has been used here, contributes to a pure general frame of mind. Forgetting the primary importance of the purity of the soul, and the belief that the morality of human acts is ascertained by a minute weighing of their possible effects upon others, and not upon the actor himself, or by subtle definitions of the millions of acts which may occur in our lives, is one of the radical and besetting vices of the Jesuitical casuists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of an Escobar, Sa, Busenbaum Bauny, Suarez and innumerable other *doctores graves*, as they were styled by their

own order* — a vice which ultimately led them to rear their amazing system of stupendous turpitude.

It will be scarcely necessary here to mention the question unfortunately still at times moved, whether a man be safe if he make the law of the land the sole standard of his moral conduct. To put this question shows the utmost confusion of morals and politics, of the righteous and the legal, of the law written in our heart, and the statute printed in the book; of the commandments of virtue, the resistance to which must remain possible, or we should lose our moral character, and the ordinances of civil authority, which must be enforced and complied with, though it be only because a penalty threatens the trans-

* Ellendorf, a Catholic priest and writer against their moraltiy and polity, mentions three hundred.

gressor; of the codes by which fellow men judge a few acts of ours here beneath, and that one code by which our Maker judges our whole soul above. But it seems to be certain, that, comprehensive as this error be, a clear perception of the obligations of the gentleman is one of the safeguards against falling into it. There are millions of actions which a gentleman cannot find the heart to perform, although the law of the land would permit them, and ought to permit them, lest an intermeddling despotism should stifle all freedom of action. Political and positive laws are not intended to be substitutes for our conscience, or the sole, or even the chief guides of our conduct through life.

A man may be a heartless husband, a cruel or foolish father, a degenerate son, an unfeeling brother, an ungrateful pupil

or undutiful teacher; he may be a careless guardian, an irksome neighbour, a hard creditor or worthless citizen and unprincipled politician; he may be uncharitable, coarse, captious, indolent, mean, false, cowardly, selfish, sordid and fanatical; he may be intemperate, obscene and impious; he may be morally and physically repulsive in every way, and a hundred times worse than many whom the law has justly stricken, and yet may pass through life unscathed by justice, possibly for the very reason that he *is* a mean and selfish man, who knows well how to subordinate his passions to cold and calculating egotism. Justice and liberty cease that moment when the law strikes aught but palpable acts; yet a person may leisurely travel the whole round of infamy and still guardedly keep from within striking distance of the

law. It ought to be so; but the law does not sustain infamy on that account; the law is not the code of our soul; the constable not the substitute for our conscience.

My friends—and you permit me by this time to call you so—if you apply the characteristics of the gentleman as I have felt myself justified and obliged to point them out, to man's practical course, you will find, first as to our daily life and personal intercourse, that the calmness of mind, which we have acknowledged as a constituent of the character of the gentleman, naturally leads him to use temperate language and prevents him from indulging in careless vulgarity, unmanly exaggeration or violent coarseness. Dealing in superlatives, substituting extravagant figures of speech for arguments or facts, and interweaving our discourse with words though of the grav-

est import, yet used as profane expletives, shows no greater want of taste than a consciousness of weakness, which may consist in the character of the speaker and the argument, or in his habitual consciousness that he is not able fully and forcibly to deliver his thoughts and feelings. Men who are in the habit of thinking clearly and have learned to speak promptly, perspicuously and vigorously, are not those who deal in profane invocations or revolting imprecation, and it *is* an attribute of the accomplished gentleman to deliver himself with propriety and to speak well, "there being nothing more becoming a gentleman, nor more useful in all the occurrences of life, than to be able on any occasion to speak well and to the purpose." These are the words of a wise man and shrewd observer, of Locke in his Essay on Education, and

if perhaps the philosopher alludes, in this passage, more particularly to speeches and debates proper, I must beg you to observe likewise that, important though they be, the daily conversation is more important, as the comfort, decency and salubrity of the common dwellings of men are still more important than the chaste propriety or lofty and commanding style of public edifices.—The kindness of his feeling prevents him from vaunting; moroseness and asperity are foreign to him, and his forbearance as well as generosity make him the safe keeper of secrets, even without the special exaction of secrecy. He is not meddlesome, and it is a principle with him not only to keep positive secrets, but to abstain from talking about personal affairs of others as a general rule, to be suspended only when there is a positive and specific reason for

so doing. The discourse of the gentleman turns upon facts, not persons. He keeps a secret, even though it give him power over an antagonist, *because* a secret of this kind *is* power, and a generous use of all power is one of the essential attributes of the true gentleman. Nor does he indicate that he possesses a secret; for, doing so is vanity, and conceit and vanity are undignified and lower the person that harbours them. His polish makes him the civil attendant upon the weaker sex, but his essential refinement does not allow him to carry this necessary element of all civilization to a degree of caricature, in treating women as if they were incapable of argument, and must forego the privilege of being dissented from, or of arriving at truth by their own reasoning. He shows instinctive deference to old age, and respect to superior authority.

In discussions, he shows his true character not only by his calmness and by abstaining from offensive positiveness, but also by the fairness of his arguments. He does not recur to those many fallacies which, though they belong to vulgar minds, or whose employment shows that we consider our adversaries as such, are, nevertheless, not without effect in brisk disputes. The well-bred gentleman gladly seizes upon those minor yet delicate attentions, which, though apparently trifling, are cheering tokens of a friendly heart, and may be compared to graceful flowerets growing by the roadside of the rugged and toilsome path of life. His habitual candour will make him, to use a familiar term, "off-hand" in his intercourse with friends; he delights in serving others, and, in turn, feels the luxury of being grateful. Above all, it pains him to give pain; and

he does and feels all that we have mentioned without affectation, selfishness, dryness or pedantry.

Let us, on the other hand, apply our principles to some of the most prominent professions or situations in practical life, such as it has formed itself with our race. Whichever field, young gentlemen, you may choose for your future labours in practical life, it is necessary that you carry the standard of the gentleman with you, and that now, ere the temptations of busy life beset you, you fix it firmly in your soul by daily repeated practice.

Those of you who intend to become divines, must remember that the whole character and meaning of the minister's calling is founded upon a constant intercourse with men, whom he has to teach, to guide, to save — an intercourse depending for its use-

fulness upon the confidence reposed in his sincerity of faith, purity of morals, prudence and honourable bearing. You will have no other power to support you. The government does not build your churches. If a congregation are convinced that their pastor is a true christian, a learned divine, and a perfect gentleman, he has the strongest hold on their confidence in him. He must not forget that the pulpit gives him a periodical and frequent opportunity of speaking to large numbers without reply. This is power, and requires, like every power, to be wielded in a gentlemanlike manner, if its possessor wishes to secure himself against his own abuse of it. If, on the other hand, the divine descends into the arena of controversy, which, however undesirable, it does not always depend upon him to avoid, he can hardly inflict a severer injury

upon his sacred cause, than by exhibiting to the world, and calling forth in his adversaries, bitterness of spirit, unfairness of argument, or passionate, gross and abusive language, in short the conduct "unbecoming a gentleman." The great cause of the Reformation was immeasurably injured by the undignified and even scurrilous character of many controversial writings on both sides, in a degree which makes us still bear the sad consequences, and which greatly interfered with the diffusion of truth over Europe. Let no one persuade you that this vehemence, as the ungentlemanly bitterness and rudeness is sometimes called by way of euphemism, was necessary against violent enemies, and according to the spirit of the times. It is as bigoted as to say that so false-hearted and sanguinary a despot as Henry the Eighth, was necessary to

break up the convents. No great and enduring cause stands in need of low or iniquitous means; and every low, vulgar or heartless word engenders two and three in reply. That which is great and true is best promoted by means high and pure.

Others of you will enter the profession of the law. They will avoid many dangers incident to this profession, by loyally adhering to the character of the gentleman. The advocate, in our country and in England, enjoys high privileges, that is power. Probably it is not desirable or feasible to check its abuse in all cases; at any rate, as matters stand, he can frequently abuse it without the probability of being restrained. It becomes, therefore, the more necessary that he check himself. I do not now speak of that in a lawyer's practice, which is censurable upon the broad and immutable prin-

ciples of morality, and from which the profession of the advocate does no more absolve than any other calling. What a degradation of the lawyer, if, like the Japanese wife, he were incapable of doing wrong! Nor do I speak of "those too common faults," as the great lawyer, Matthew Hale, said, "of misrepresenting evidence, quoting precedents or books falsely, or asserting anything confidently by which ignorant juries or weak judges are too often wrought upon."* I believe these trespasses are now far rarer. Nor shall I dwell upon the fact that a gentlemanly spirit must needs be a safeguard against becoming a "leguleius quidam cautus et acutus, præco actionum, cantor formularum, auceps syllabarum."†

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* Burnet's Life of Sir Matthew Hale, p. 72.

† Cicero, in Oratore, fragm. ap. Augustin I, 3 contra Acad. c. 7.

The pettifogger and the *legicrepa*, as the Low Latin had it, are the opposites to the gentleman advocate—one of the finest types of the citizen of a free country. Nor need I mention that it is incumbent upon a judge to move scrupulously within the limits of the gentleman, if it be incumbent upon any one in the wide range of civilized society. I pass over all this as plainly obvious; but I must mention to you, inexperienced as you are, that lawyers not unfrequently here and in England, allow their zeal for the client or the prosecution, to make them visibly swerve from the path of the gentleman. However close and searching your examination of a witness may be, you are bound by all the laws of morality, by all the principles of high-mindedness and the very meaning of the institution of the advocate itself, to behave as gentlemen toward him,

whom the laws of your society place for a time in an irksome situation, and make dependant upon you.

An occurrence, which happened not long ago in England, may find here an appropriate place, as a warning to those who, at no distant period, will enjoy the privileges of counsel in the sacred halls of justice; but to avoid being misunderstood, you must permit me first distinctly to state, that I think it absolutely necessary that every indicted prisoner have his defender, that is counsel learned in the law, who, however criminal or obviously convicted his client may stand at the bar of justice, shall still watch that the prisoner receive nothing but what the law decrees, and enjoy all the advantages which the law may positively grant or not positively withhold.* In order to obtain this

*I have fully given my views on this subject in the chapter on the Advocate in Political Ethics.

important end in all its fulness, it is necessary that every advocate consider himself pledged to grant his services to whomsoever may apply for them. The "custom" of the English bar, settled by repeated decisions of the bar itself, is to accept any retainer as it comes. It is considered "ungentlemanly" not to do it, unless there be particular and urgent reasons for declining, such as abhorrence of the very principle to be established. It happened in Erskine's life that he was retained for "the First Regiment of Guards;" but it was found that the "first regiment of guards" is no legal person that can appear in court. It became necessary, therefore, to change the name of the complainants from the first regiment of guards to that of individual persons. The attorney of the opposite party sent, at once, his retainer to Erskine; for, he was no longer

retained by the regiment, and not yet again retained by the persons substituted for it; and, however distasteful to the great advocate this particular case happened to be, he declared—and it is the general opinion in England—that it is one of the most important *rights* of the subject, that every advocate must allow himself to be retained, so long as he is not retained by the opposite side.

If an advocate happen to know the foulness of a transaction which he is called upon to defend, he must decline, but in doing so, the utmost circumspection and a very high degree of conviction are requisite; for, he must not forget that by his declining, he in a degree prejudges a case yet to be tried. It is in this sense, I believe, that we must understand the words of Tronchet, the counsel of Louis the Sixteenth, when at the bar of the Convention.

Tronchet said: "Every man thus publicly called upon to defend an accused person, cannot decline his services without taking upon himself the responsibility of pronouncing a judgment—precipitate (his word is *temeraire*,) before the examination of the case, and barbarous, after it." There is no fairer occurrence in our Revolution, than the defence of the British soldiers who had fired upon the people, by John Adams and Mr. Quincy, both ardent patriots, and for that reason implored by the father of the latter not to defend "murderers." They simply answered that the soldiers had not yet been tried. It was noble when Mr. de Martignac, dismissed from the ministry by prince Polignac, nevertheless defended the latter after the revolution of 1830, because called upon to do so by Polignac, when arraigned

before the peers. All this is as it ought to be, but the advocate is not therfore absolved from moral obligations, as the barrister in the case alluded to must have presumed. This is the case:

In the year 1840, a man, named Courvoisier, murdered lord William Russell. His counsel received a full confession from the prisoner twenty-four hours before the trial. The barrister stated the fact to the judge, who told him "to do his best," according to custom. And what did he do, who seems first to have doubted the propriety of defending a confessed criminal? He presented one of the witnesses, Mrs. Priolans, a woman of unblemished character, who kept a respectable boarding house, as having perjured herself, and keeping a house of the worst character; he called the police-men ruffians, a gang

of blockheads, panting for rewards, though he knew that the police no longer accept of rewards, and treated Courvoisier's female servant most unwarrantably.* I abstain from giving you the name of him who was guilty of conduct so shameless; for, he is yet living and may repent. We hope he may. His conduct is so revolting, that ingenious youth may ask, why I relate an occurrence so obviously criminal, that it stands on a par with any other criminal deviation from the path of rectitude? I do it, because this barrister is one of no common standing, and of established name, who seems to have fallen into this grievous offence from an incorrect view of the duties of counsel, and because he could not have fallen into it, had he felt like a gen-

* I follow in this relation the papers and reviews, such as the Edinburgh, of the time.

tleman. If advocates were the only persons on earth who stand absolved from the obligations of truth, morality and justice, society would have placed itself under a most degrading and absurd despotism, and their whole order ought speedily to be abolished. Yet it is a fact that the institution of the advocate exists everywhere along with civil liberty, and is indispensable to it;* therefore, let them be gentlemen.

* I have dwelt on this subject more at length in the chapters on the Judge, Jury and Advocate in Political Ethics. The enemies of civil liberty know well the importance of the institution of the advocate for civil liberty. Archbishop Laud and earl Strafford show, in their correspondence, the most inveterate hatred against lawyers, without whom, they confess to each other, it would be easy to establish the king's "absolute" sovereignty, their adored idol; and Duclos (page 335, vol. 76, of Collect. des Memoires, second series,) says that the foreign ministers applauded, in the name of their masters, the regent, duke of Orleans, for having repressed *ces legistes*, (in 1718,) that is, having incarcerated three presidents of the parliament. Laud and Strafford, however, ought not to have forgotten those lawyers, who, as Audley, successor to sir Thomas More, urged it as a claim to promotion, "had willingly incurred all manner of infamy to serve the government."

The prosecuting officer, on the other hand, must not forget that the indicted person is placed in his power, which he may abuse, seriously, scandalously and in an ungentlemanly manner, as history most amply shows; that the prisoner is yet to be tried; that the object of the trial is justice, not to oppress, worry or hunt down the prisoner, or to asperse his character so foully, that though he may be acquitted, his reputation may be ruined for life, and that too, perhaps, merely by insinuations. In the course of your studies you will find instances of what I say in sir Edward Coke and in Bacon—him, who would never have been so deplorably wrecked that he saved naught but immortal fame of intellect, had he felt like a gentleman instead of cringing before a James and fawning upon a Buckingham,

being ready for their meanest and their darkest work. Bacon was void of dignity and honour.*—Earl Strafford said after his trial for high treason: "Glynne and Maynard have used me like advocates, but Palmer and Whitelock like gentlemen, and yet left out nothing that was material to be urged against me." Does not every one understand at once what he meant? And do not my hearers feel that Strafford himself, in uttering these words, felt that fairness and liberality of judgment which is "becoming a gentleman?"

Do not believe that you will lastingly promote even your worldly interests as lawyers, by any infraction of the strictest

* With sadness, indeed, we find a new and appalling confirmation of Pope's "greatest, meanest of mankind," in the lately renewed inquiry into the trial of the duchess of Somerset, for the murder of Overbury.

rules of a gentlemanly conduct. Every advocate of experience, I venture to say, will tell you that a fairly established reputation as gentlemen will be an efficient agent in promoting your career as lawyers.

The healing art stands no less in need of being practised by gentlemen than the law. In no profession is a constant acting upon the strictest principles of gentlemanliness more indispensable in a general point of view, as well as with especial reference to professional success, than in the practice of medicine and surgery. We know, indeed, that there have been physicians of eminence, who have signalized themselves alike by professional skill and commensurate success on the one hand, and offensive bluntness on the other; but we know, too, that instead of following out their noble missions of alleviating suffer-

ing, in all its details, they have wantonly added to the affliction of their patients, and that the very highest degree of skill and knowledge was requisite to counterbalance the evil consequences of their ungentlemanly manners. I speak of manners only; for if the physician be void of the principles of the gentleman, his ruin must be the inevitable consequence. The aim of the healing art is to cure or alleviate human suffering in this life in which it is the lot of man to suffer much—*to heal*, as the name imports, and the medical adviser efficiently aids his purely therapeutic efforts, by soothing the heart of the patient and comforting the anxious souls of those who watch the sick-bed in distress and gloom. I do not know that man can appear in a brighter phase than as a physician, full of knowledge and skill, calm, careful, bold,

and with the soothing adjuncts of gentlemanly blandness. The physician, moreover, must needs be admitted, not only into the recess of the sick-chamber, but very frequently into the recesses of his patient's heart, and into the sanctuary of domestic life with its virtues and its failings and frailties. If he do not carry with him the standard of the purest honour; if he take the slighest advantage of his position; if he fail to keep what he sees and hears buried in secrecy as inviolable as that of the confessor; if he expose what must be revealed to him, he falls from his high station and becomes an afflicting injurer and sower of evil instead of a comforter, allaying pain and stilling sorrow where he can. The effect of a gentlemanly spirit and consequent manners is even great in that branch of the healing art in which you

may least expect it—in surgery. I have passed months in hospitals, and have had ample opportunity to observe the different effects produced upon the patients, though soldiers they were, during serious operations, even the amputation of limbs, by kindly, gentlemanly surgeons, and by those who chilled their victim's heart with gruff words, or handled him with hasty and mechanic hands. How gratefully do the poverty-stricken remember a kind word of the physican under whose care they have been in the hospital! How lasting an impression of horror does the harshness of those physicians produce who make the patient bitterly feel his poverty in wealth and friends, in addition to his bodily pain and an aching heart!

Some of you, no doubt, will become editors of newspapers. The journal has

become a prominent agent of modern civilization, and the editor holds great power in comparison with his fellow-citizens. He daily speaks to many; he can reiterate; he is supported by the weight which, however unfounded the opinion may be, is attached by the minds of almost all men to every thing printed, over that which is merely spoken; and he is sure that the contradiction of what he states will not run precisely in the same channels, through which the first assertion was conveyed. All this, and the consideration that the daily repeated tone in which a paper publishes or discusses the many occurrences of the day produces a sure effect upon the general tone of the community, ought to warn an editor, that if the obligations of a gentleman are binding upon any one, they are indubitably so upon him. The evil influ-

ence which some papers in our country, very active, but very ungentlemanlike, have already exercised upon our community cannot be denied. Let me in addition single out but one peculiar application of the general duty of editors always to conduct their papers as gentlemen—I mean the abstaining from unauthorized publication of private letters, confidential conversations, and in general, from any exposure of strictly private affairs. The publishing of private letters, indelicately authorized by those to whom they are addressed, is a failing of more frequent occurrence in this than in any other country, and no gentlemanly editor will give his aid in thus confounding public and private life, deteriorating public taste and trespassing upon a sacred right of others, as clearly pronounced and protected by positive law, as it obviously flows

from the nature of the case—the distinct rule that the writer's consent is necessary for a lawful publication of letters.* It was necessary to mention this palpable infraction of a gentlemanly conduct; but it is so obvious a deviation from the regard, which one gentleman owes to another, that, once being mentioned, it is unnecessary to say anything more about it.

That the universal obligation of veracity is most emphatically binding upon the editor, is evident, but it does not belong exclusively to the subject of gentlemanship. The subject of veracity is as general, comprehensive and elemental, in the moral world and all human life, as that of light is in all physical science and the life of nature.

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* There is an interesting account of the decisions and the law as it now stands in England, on "the Copyright of Private Letters," appended by the bishop of Llandaff, to the Letters of the Earl of Dudley, new edition, London, 1841.

A most important subject yet remains for our consideration,—the character of the gentleman with reference to politics or the public life of the citizen; but I have detained you already so much beyond the time, during which I expected to put your patience to a test, that I am constrained to limit myself to a hasty sketch of a very few subjects only, connected with that immediately in hand.

The greater the liberty is which we enjoy in any sphere of life, the more binding, necessarily, becomes the obligation of self-restraint, and, consequently, the more important all the rules of action which flow from our reverence for the pure character of the gentleman—an importance which is enhanced in the present period of our country, because one of its striking features, if I mistake not, is an intense and general atten-

tion to rights, without a parallel and proportionately clear perception of corresponding obligations. But right and obligation are twins — they are like the binary flames of Castor and Pollux, which the sailors of the Mediterranean consider as a sure sign of fair weather and prosperous winds; but if one alone is seen illumining the yard's end, the mariner fears foul weather and danger. Right and obligation are each other's complements, and cannot be severed without undermining the ethical ground on which we stand — that ground on which alone civilization, justice, virtue and real progress can build enduring monuments. Right and obligation are the warp and the woof of the tissue of man's moral, and therefore likewise of man's civil life. Take out the one, and the other is in worthless confusion. We must return to this moment-

ous principle, the first of all moral government, and, as fairness and calmness are two prominent ingredients in the character of the gentleman, it is plain that this reform must be materially promoted by a general diffusion of a sincere regard for that character. Liberty, which is the enjoyment of unfettered action, necessarily leads to licentiousness, without an increased binding power within; for liberty offers to man, indeed, a free choice of action, but it cannot absolve him from the duty of choosing what is right, fair, liberal, urbane and handsome.

Where there is freedom of action, no matter in what region or what class of men, there always have been, and must be, parties, whether they be called party, school, sect, or "faction."* These will

* In the conclave the cardinals used to divide into Spanish, French, etc. factions, i. e. parties; possibly they do so still.

necessarily often act against each other; but, as a matter of course, they are not allowed to dispense with any of the principles of morality. The principle that everything is permitted in politics is so shameless, and ruinous to all, that I need not dwell upon it here.* But there are a great many

* An unprincipled politician says, every thing is fair in politics; fanatics and hypocrites have spoken of "pious frauds;" sanctimonious shopkeepers allow of no deceit except "a trick in trade;" the commentator of the English Law says, a little wrong may be done that great good may be obtained; a disloyal husband keeps "honour bright," except a little cheating toward his wife. Lord Brougham said, in the trial of queen Caroline, The advocate has no other consideration on earth than to save his client, though he should set his whole country on fire. Conspirators as well as princes have dispensed with the binding power of the oath, and pupils have believed that a lie is shameful everywhere except if proffered to a teacher; citizens, otherwise fair in a considerable degree, have believed that the dictates of honesty are not binding in the custom house, or when dealing with the post office, while fashionable people consider an occasional untruth as harmless, and De Foe, a noble character in the history of literature, believed himself justified, because aiding a poor bookseller nearly ruined by the publication of a work on death, in giving the fictitious account of a returning spirit,

acts which, though it may not be possible to prove them wrong according to the strict laws of ethics, nevertheless appear at once as unfair, not strictly honourable, ungentlemanlike; and it is of the utmost importance to the essential prosperity of a free country that these acts should not be resorted to; that in the minor or higher assemblies and in all party struggles, even the intensest, we ought never to abandon the standard of the gentleman. It is all-important that parties keep in "good humour," as lord Clarendon said of the whole country. One deviation from fairness, candour, decorum and "fair play," begets another and worse

which recommends the mentioned work as perfectly accurate, with such appearance of truth, that, according to English writers, it is believed by thousands to this day. Many persons, discountenancing deceit in all spheres of action, think it admissible in international intercourse. Where then remains truth? All morality becomes a thing binding upon every one — except in his own particular case, consequently upon no one.

in the opponent, and from the kindliest difference of opinion to the fiercest struggle of factions, sword in hand, is but one unbroken gradual descent, however great the distance may be, while few things are surer to forestall or arrest this degeneracy than a common and hearty esteem of the character of the gentleman. We have in our country a noble example of calmness, truthfulness, dignity, fairness and urbanity—constituents of the character which we are considering—in the father of our country; for Washington, the wise and steadfast patriot, was also the high-minded gentleman. When the malcontent officers of his army informed him that they would lend him their support, if he were willing to build himself a throne, he knew how to blend the dictates of his oath to the commonwealth, and of his patriotic heart, with

those of a gentlemanly feeling toward the deluded and irritated. In the sense in which we take the term here, it is not the least of his honours that, through all the trying periods and scenes of his remarkable life, the historian and moralist can write him down, not only as Washington the Wise, not only as Washington the Pure and Single-minded, but also as Washington the Gentleman.

If in a country of varied, quick and ardent political action and manifold excitement, in which changes and new combinations must often take place, the standard of the high-bred gentleman be abandoned, the effect is as baneful as that of a prying and falsifying secret police in despotic governments. Mr. Ranke relates, in his History of the Popes, that the utmost caution of each to every one prevailed in Rome,

because no one knew how he might stand with his best friend, in a year's time. The same destruction of confidence and mutual reliance must spread over the land where freedom reigns, but a gentlemanly character does not at the same time prevail. Lord Shaftesbury, the brilliant, energetic and reckless Alcibiades of English history, rigidly observed the rule, during all his tergiversations, "that he never betrayed the secrets of a party he had left, or made harsh personal observations on the conduct of his old friends; not only trying to keep up a familiar private intercourse with them, but abstaining from vindictive reflections upon them in his speeches or his writings."*

* Lord Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors. Vol. iii. p. 290. I am aware that sir Samuel Romilly took a somewhat different view of the blending of private intercourse with political opposition, as appears from his Life and Correspondence by his son; but I believe the difference is more apparent than real, as would seem from his own life.

This observance and his Habeas Corpus Act go far with us in redeeming the character of this profligate and unprincipled statesman. If you wish to see the disastrous effects of a general destruction of confidence and mutual reliance, you must study Spanish history; for, I believe that the worst effect of the Inquisition has been the total change of the Spanish national character. Even dukes became spies, and that noble nation was filled with truculent suspicion, in the dark shades of which the character of the gentleman can not prosper.

I must not omit mentioning at least, the importance of a gentlemanly spirit in all international transactions with sister nations of our race—and even with tribes which follow different standards of conduct and morality. Nothing seems to me to show more undeniably the real progress which

human society has made, than the general purity of judges,* together with the improvement of the whole administration of justice, so far at least as the leading nations are concerned, and the vastly improved morals of modern international intercourse, holding diplomatic fraud and international trickery, bullying, and pettifogging, as no less unwise than immoral. History, and that of our own times, especially, teaches us that nowhere is the vapouring braggadocio more out of place, and the true gentleman more in his proper sphere, than in conducting international affairs. Fairness

* I have lived for long periods in Italy, Germany, France, England and the United States, and never heard, in the four last mentioned countries, of a judge suspected of bribery. Yet, only a short period has elapsed since satire and comedy teemed with the standing subjects of bribed judges, criminal advocates, and irksome wedlock, and lord Campbell, in the work cited in the preceding note, says, "England, during the Stuart reigns, was cursed by a succession of ruffians in ermine, who, for the sake of court-favour, violated the principles of law, the precepts of religion and the dictates of humanity."

on the one hand, and collected self-respect on the other, will frequently make matters easy, where swaggering taunt, or reckless conceit and insulting folly, may lead to the serious misunderstanding of entire nations, and a sanguinary end. The firm and dignified carriage of our senate, and the absence of petty passion, or vain-gloriousness in the British parliament, have brought the Oregon question to a fair and satisfactory end—an affair which, but a short time ago, was believed by many to be involved in difficulties which the sword alone was able to cut short. Even genuine personal urbanity in those to whom international affairs are entrusted, is very frequently of the last importance for a happy ultimate good understanding between the mightiest nations.

We may express a similar opinion with

reference to war. Nothing mitigates so much its hardships, and few things, depending upon individuals, aid more in preparing a welcome peace, than a gentlemanly spirit in the commanders, officers, and, indeed, in all the combatants toward their enemies, whenever an opportunity offers itself. I might give you many striking proofs, but I observe that the clepsydra is nearly run out. Let me merely add, as a fact worthy of notice, that political assassination, especially in times of war, was not looked upon in antiquity as inadmissible; that sir Thomas More mentions the assassination of the hostile captain, as a wise measure resorted to by his Utopians; that queen Elizabeth called sir Amyas Paulet, "a dainty fellow," because he was unwilling to lend a hand in ridding her of the captive Mary, queen of Scots, and

cardinal Retz quietly weighed the expediency of murdering cardinal Mazarin, his successful rival in the civil broils of France; that the ambassadors of the British parliament, and later, the commonwealth-men in exile, were picked off by assassination; while Charles Fox, during the war with the French, arrested the man who offered to assassinate Napoleon, informed the French government of the fact, and sent the man out of the country;* and admiral lord St. Vincent, the stern enemy of the French, directed his secretary to write the following answer to a similar offer, made by a French emigrant: "Lord St. Vincent has not words to express the detestation in which he holds an assassin."† Fox and

* Pell's Life of Charles James Fox, p. 592.

† Tucker, Memoirs of Admiral the Earl St. Vincent, vol. i. p. 203.

Vincent acted like christians and gentlemen.

I have mentioned two cheering characteristics of our period, showing an essential progress in our race. I ought to add a third, namely, the more gentlemanly spirit which pervades modern penal laws. I am well aware that the whole system of punition has greatly improved, because men have made penology a subject of serious reflection, and the utter fallacy of many principles, in which our forefathers seriously believed, has at length been exposed. But it is at the same time impossible to study the history of penal law without clearly perceiving that punishments were formerly dictated by a vindictive ferocity — an ungentlemanly spirit of oppression. All the accumulated atrocities heaped upon the criminal, and not unfrequently upon his in-

nocent kin, merely because he was what now gently would be called "in the opposition," make us almost hear the enraged punisher vulgarly utter: "Now I have you, and you shall see how I'll manage you." Archbishop Laud, essentially not a gentleman, but a vindictive persecutor of every one who dared to differ from his coarse views of state and church, presided in the star-chamber and animated its members, when lord keeper Coventry pronounced the following sentence on Dr. Alexander Leighton, a Scottish divine, for slandering prelacy: "that the defendant should be imprisoned in the Fleet during life—should be fined ten thousand pounds—and, after being degraded from holy orders by the high commissioners, should be set in the pillory in Westminster—there be whipped—after being whipped, again be set in the

pillory—have one of his ears cut off—have his nose slit—be branded in the face with a double S. S., for a Sower of Sedition—afterwards be set in the pillory in Cheapside, and there be whipped, and after being whipped, again be set in the pillory and have his other ear cut off." The whole council agreed. There was no recommendation to pardon or mitigation. The sentence was inflicted. Could a gentleman have proposed or voted for so brutal an accumulation of pain, insult, mutilation and ruin, no matter what the fundamental errors prevailing in penal law then were? Nor have I selected this, from other sentences, for its peculiar cruelty. Every student of history knows that they were common at the time, against all who offended authority even unknowingly. Stubbs, a divine in the reign of queen Elizabeth, was

sentenced to have his right hand cut off, because, when the marriage of the queen with a French prince was discussing, he had ventured to express, in a pamphlet, his fears of the danger to which the queen would expose herself in possible child-bed, on account of her age. She was then between forty and fifty. Yet, when the executioner had severed his hand, he waved his hat with the remaining left, and exclaimed, Long live the queen! Compare the spirit which could overwhelm a victim with such brutality, and the branding, pillory and whipping still existing in many countries, with the spirit of calmness, kindness, yet seriousness and dignity which pervades such a punitory scheme as the Pennsylvania eremitic penitentiary system, which, for the very reason that it is gentlemanly, is the most impressive and

penetrating, therefore the most forbidding of all.

Let me barely allude to the duties of the gentleman in those countries in which slavery still exists. Plato says,* genuine humanity and real probity are brought to the test, by the behaviour of a man to slaves, whom he may wrong with impunity. He speaks like a gentleman. Although his golden rule applies to all whom we may offend or grieve with impunity, and the fair and reluctant use of any power we may possess, is one of the truest tests of the gentleman, yet it is natural that Plato should have made the treatment of the slave the peculiar test, because slavery gives the greatest power. Cicero says we should use slaves no otherwise than we do our day-labourers.† I have stated al-

* De Legibus, lib. vi. edi. Bipont, viii. 203.
† De Officiis, xiii.

ready that the forbearing use of power is a sure attribute of the true gentleman; indeed, we may say that power, physical, moral, purely social or political, is one of the touchstones of genuine gentlemanship. The power which the husband has over his wife, in which we must include the impunity with which he may be unkind to her; the father over his children; the teacher over his pupils; the old over the young and the young over the aged; the strong over the weak; the officer over his men; the master of a vessel over his hands; the magistrate over the citizen; the employer over the employed; the rich over the poor; the educated over the unlettered; the experienced over the confiding; the keeper of a secret over him whom it touches; the gifted over the ordinary man; even the clever over the silly — the for-

bearing and inoffensive use of all this power or authority, or a total abstinence from it, where the case admits it, will show the gentleman in a plain light. Every traveller knows at once, whether a gentlemanly or rude officer is searching his trunk. But the use of power does not only form a touchstone; even the manner in which an individual enjoys certain advantages over others is a test. No gentleman can boast of the delights of superior health in presence of a languid patient, or speak of great good luck when in hearing of a man bent by habitual misfortune. Let a man, who happily enjoys the advantages of a pure and honest life, speak of it to a fallen, criminal fellow being, and you will soon see whether he be, in addition to his honesty, a gentleman or not. The gentleman does not needlessly and unceasingly

remind an offender of a wrong he may have committed against him. He can, not only forgive, he can forget; and he strives for that nobleness of soul and manliness of character, which impart sufficient strength to let the past be truly past. He will never use the power which the knowledge of an offence, a false step or an unfortunate exposure of weakness give him, merely to enjoy the power of humiliating his neighbor. A true man of honour feels humbled himself, when he cannot help humbling others.

The subject which I have chosen covers so extensive a ground, that it is difficult to break off or select the most important points. Give me leave, then, young gentlemen, to refer to but one more subject of practical importance, before I shall address to you my concluding remarks. It is the

subject of deriding others, so natural to untutored minds, yet so inconsistent with a truly gentlemanly spirit, because so painful, and generally so undeservedly painful, to those who are the objects of our deriding smiles. A very few reflections will show you that they are not agreeable to that genuine good nature, and still less conformable to that refinement of feeling which characterize the gentleman. Perhaps it will appear that he who laughs at others, shows that he deserves our pity more than the person laughed at. There is no subject in the whole province of psychology which offers greater difficulties, possibly none that offers difficulties so great as that of laughing and the ridiculous. You will find that we feel tempted to smile, sometimes, even when our soul is filled with horror. We ought then to take care not to

be betrayed into an act so little understood, when done at the cost of another, who may feel pained or humbled by our inadvertence. We may further say that every thing novel, which does not at once strike us as grand, sublime or awful, inclines us first of all to smile. The advanced state of my address prevents me from giving you instances. You can easily, however, provide them for yourselves. But if the fact be as I have stated, you will readily see that the smile, caused by everything novel, betrays as often our own ignorance as any better cause of risibility. You ought, moreover, always to remember that every human action, perceptible by the senses, and which strikes us at all, causes us to laugh, if we are unacquainted with its antecedents, or if we see it out of connexion, unless an experienced mind and vivid

imagination quickly supply the antecedents, or a well trained mind abstains from laughing at others or at striking objects, as a general rule. Here, again, the ridiculous is not inherent in the phenomenon, but it is owing to him that laughs. To see, but not to hear, persons singing, is to all untutored minds ridiculous. Suddenly to find a man vehemently speaking and gesticulating strikes us as laughable, while, had we been present from the beginning, he might thrill our very souls by those same tones and gestures. Even marks of the tenderest affection fare no better in this respect, and what is more common than the laughing of the uneducated at the accent of those, who, nevertheless, may have used great diligence and study to make themselves well understood in an idiom, all the difficulties of which they are unable to

overcome, because they have not learned it on their fathers' knees, or from their mothers' blessing lips, and most willingly would speak to you without any of those deviations at which you may smile, did it depend upon them. The Koran says, "Do not mock; the mocked may be better than the mocker." It is a truth, for which none of us stand in need of an authority, yet we frequently laugh at acts of our neighbours. Did we know all the antecedents, their whole education, their checkered lives, we should find nothing to smile at, and at times, these very acts might make us weep indeed. It is a rule, therefore, of much practical importance for the gentleman, never to laugh at others unless their pretensions deserve it; but if he, in turn, be laughed at, he will remember that it is a common failing of which he has not always

remained free; that placid good nature is a signal attribute of the gentleman, and that, if he have given real cause for laughter, there is no better means to deprive it of all its sting, than freely to join in it.

I have spoken of laughing at others only, not of laughing in general. He that can never heartily laugh can hardly have a heart at all, or must be of a heavy mind. A sound laugh at the proper time is the happy music of a frank and confiding soul. It is the impulsive and spontaneous song which the creator gave to man, and to man alone, in lieu of all the lovely tones which he profusely granted to the warblers of the wood.

But we must return to more serious subjects before I conclude. They shall be treated in two more remarks, the last with which I shall detain you. They will be

very brief; but, young gentlemen, I invite your whole attention to them. Ponder them; for they are of momentous importance for your whole lives—important even to your country.

"Habit is the best magistrate," was a wise saying of lord Bacon's. Merely mental acknowledgment of moral truth forsakes you, when it becomes most important to apply it—in moments of great temptation, of provocation or passion. If repeated and constant acting upon that truth has not induced a habit or grown into a virtue, it may be sufficiently strong to produce repentance after the offence, but not to guide before the wrong be committed. Apply yourselves, then, sedulously at once to act habitually and constantly by the highest standard of the gentleman—to let a truly gentlemanly spirit permeate your soul.

No better opportunity to practise this moral rule is given you than your present relation to your teachers. Let ever a gentlemanly tone subsist between you. You will not only make your lives pleasant and sow the seeds of happy remembrance, but it will give new force and new meaning to the very instruction, for the reception of which you have come hither, and it will best prepare you for establishing that relation which is one of the happiest, most fruitful and blessed that can subsist between man and man—I mean friendship between the teacher and the taught—a relation of which we find so touching an example in Socrates and his followers, and so holy a model in Christ and his disciples—a relation which lends new strength to the mind to seize what is offered, and which, in a great measure, overcomes the difficulty of

communion between soul and soul. For, all language, except in mathematics, is but approximation to the subject to be expressed, and affection is the readiest, truest and richest interpreter of the ever-imperfect human word. Believe me, my young friends, however extensive the knowledge of your teacher, skilful his language, or ardent his zeal, and close your attention may be, you will hear and learn far more, if affection toward him animates that attention, and you will integrate with your very soul that which, without friendship between you and him, remains matter of purely intellectual activity, liable to be superseded by successive layers of knowledge.

If thus you make the character of the gentleman more and more your own, you will prepare yourselves in a manner, important among others, for the high and

weighty trusts which await all of you as citizens of a commonwealth in which we enjoy a rare degree of personal liberty. I have shown you how closely connected the character of the gentleman is with a high standard of true civil liberty, but it is necessary to direct your mind, in addition, to the fact that there are difficulties in the way of attaining to this high end, peculiar to young Americans, while yet it may be one of the problems, the solution of which is assigned to us by History, to develope the peculiar character of the high-bred republican gentleman in a pervading national type, as it has been that of England to develope the character of the monarchical gentleman.

It is difficult for princes to imbibe the true spirit of the gentleman, because their position and education naturally lead to the

growth of selfishness; and so there are, on the other hand, difficulties, not insuperable, yet positive, in the way of carefully cultivating this character peculiar to a country like ours, in which large numbers are constantly rolling westward and changing their dwellings, neighbours and associations, in which a degree of success, in a worldly view, awaits, almost certainly, health, industry and prudence, without necessarily requiring the addition of refinement of feelings or polish of conduct, and in which a greater amount of individual liberty is enjoyed than in any other country. Suffrage is almost universal, and so far as the vote goes, all have equal weight; you see some persons rise to distinction, without any high claim to morality, religion or gentlemanliness, and the powerholders, whether they be monarchs or the people, a few or many,

ever listen to flattery. It is inherent in power; and it is a common belief, though I am firmly convinced of the contrary, that large masses are not flattered by gentlemanliness. Even if it were so, we would have no right to sacrifice so important a moral standard. Are we allowed to do any evil which we may yet be fully persuaded would promote our worldly interest? Is it ever safe, even in a purely prudential point of view, to be guided by secondary motives, when conduct and the choice of objects, not the selection of means are the question? But happily it is not so. Even the least educated have an instinctive regard for the high-bred gentleman, however they may contemn certain counterfeits of the gentleman, especially the dandy; and the acknowledgment on the part of a whole community that a man *is* a gentle-

man, gives him a hold on it most important in all matters of action. Adhere to it. If you see others rise above you by practices which you contemn, you must remember that it is one of the very attributes of the gentleman, to stand alone when occasion requires it, in dignity and self-possession, without conceit, but conscious that he has acted right, honourably, gentlemanly.* Distrust every one who would persuade you to promote your interest by *descending*. The elementary law of all progress, be it religious, mental, political or industrial, is that those who have talent, skill, character or knowledge in advance of others, should draw these after them, and make

* The importance of the character of the gentleman in politics, especially in the legislative assembly and in the representative in general, has been more fully discussed by me in the chapters on the duties of the representative in the second volume of Political Ethics.

them *rise*. This is the truly democratic law of united advancement, in which every one leads in whatever he can lead. All else is suspicious aristocracy — the aristocracy of a few, or the acristocracy of the low, if aristocracy is marked, as I think it is, by undue privilege, which is unbefitting to all men, be they a few, or the many. Scan history and you will find that throughout the annals of civilization this uniform law prevails, that a favoured mind perceives a truth, gives utterance to it, is first disbelieved, derided or attacked, perhaps called upon to seal the truth with his death; but the truth is not lost on that account; it infuses itself into the minds of the very detractors; it spreads farther and farther, is discussed and modified; it collects votaries sufficient to form a minority, and at length the minority swells into a majority,

which ultimately establishes the principle in practice; so that the whole process has consisted in men being led upwards to the truth, not in truth descending downward to a stagnant level of mediocrity, ignorance or want of civilization. It requires patience and gentlemanly forbearance, but is not God the most patient of all? You cannot point out a single vast movement of mankind towards an essential improvement, which does not serve as an illustration of the law which I have just stated to you.

And now, gentlemen, at the very moment of writing these last words, I received the speech of sir Robert Peel on the 30th of June,* in which he explains the reasons of his resignation and his defeat in parliament, after having happily passed the free corn-

* In the year 1846.

trade bill; and as the reader is referred in some works to a diagram at the end of the volume, so shall I conclude by pointing to that manly speech as a practical illustration of much that I have said on the conduct of the gentleman in politics. Outvoted in parliament, discarded by the party with whom he came into office, and seeing his successor in power, influence and honours before him, he still speaks of his whole position, his antagonists and his former friends now turned into bitter enemies, with calmness, dignity and cheerful liberality, readily allowing that in a constitutional country, the loss of power ought to be the natural consequence of a change of opinion upon a vital party question, that is upon a subject of national magnitude. Yet he rejoices at having thus come to different and truer views upon so essential a point

as that of the daily bread of toiling multitudes, and frankly ascribes the chief merit of this momentous progress to a person* who belongs to a sphere of politics totally different from that in which he himself has been accustomed to move. It is a gentle-

* Mr. R. Cobden, member of parliament, and leader of the Anti-Corn Law League, has deserved well of mankind. There is but one omission in sir Robert Peel's speech, with which we feel tempted to find fault. No one admires more than myself, Mr. Cobden's wise and energetic course, which, indeed, procured him the offer of a place in the cabinet from the Whigs, when they were forming their new administration; but even his labours and the arduous exertions of the League, would have remained unavailing for a long time yet, as it seems, had not divine wisdom sent at this precise juncture the potato rot, and thus aided one of the greatest advancements of mankind, to come to maturity. The historian must mention, together wirh Cobden and the League, the potato rot.

This acknowledgment of sir Robert Peel's is another evidence of the invaluable usefulness of that greatest of institutions which characterize our own modern liberty—a principled and persevering opposition, to which sir Robert Peel bore the same striking testimony, when, in 1829, the catholic emancipation bill had been carried by the Wellington and Peel cabinet, and the latter said, in the commons: "One parting word, and I have done. I have received in the speech of my

manly speech, leaving a corresponding impression in his own country and throughout ours, conciliating, and commanding esteem, —an effect such as always attends a conduct truly gentlemanly, where civilization dwells among men.

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noble friend, the member for Donegal, testimonies of approbation which are grateful to my soul; and they have been liberally awarded to me by gentlemen on the other side of the house in a manner which does honour to the forbearance of party among us. They have, however, one and all, awarded to me a credit which I do not deserve for settling this question. The credit belongs to others and not to me; it belongs to Mr. Fox—to Mr. Grattan—to Mr. Plunket—to the gentlemen opposite, and to an illustrious and right honourable friend of mine who is no more, (meaning Mr. Canning). By their efforts, *in spite of my opposition*, it has proved victorious."—And may not be added here, with propriety, the reforms of the penal code of England, so perseveringly urged by sir Samuel Romilly and sir James Mackintosh, and at length partially adopted by sir Robert Peel, in 1830?

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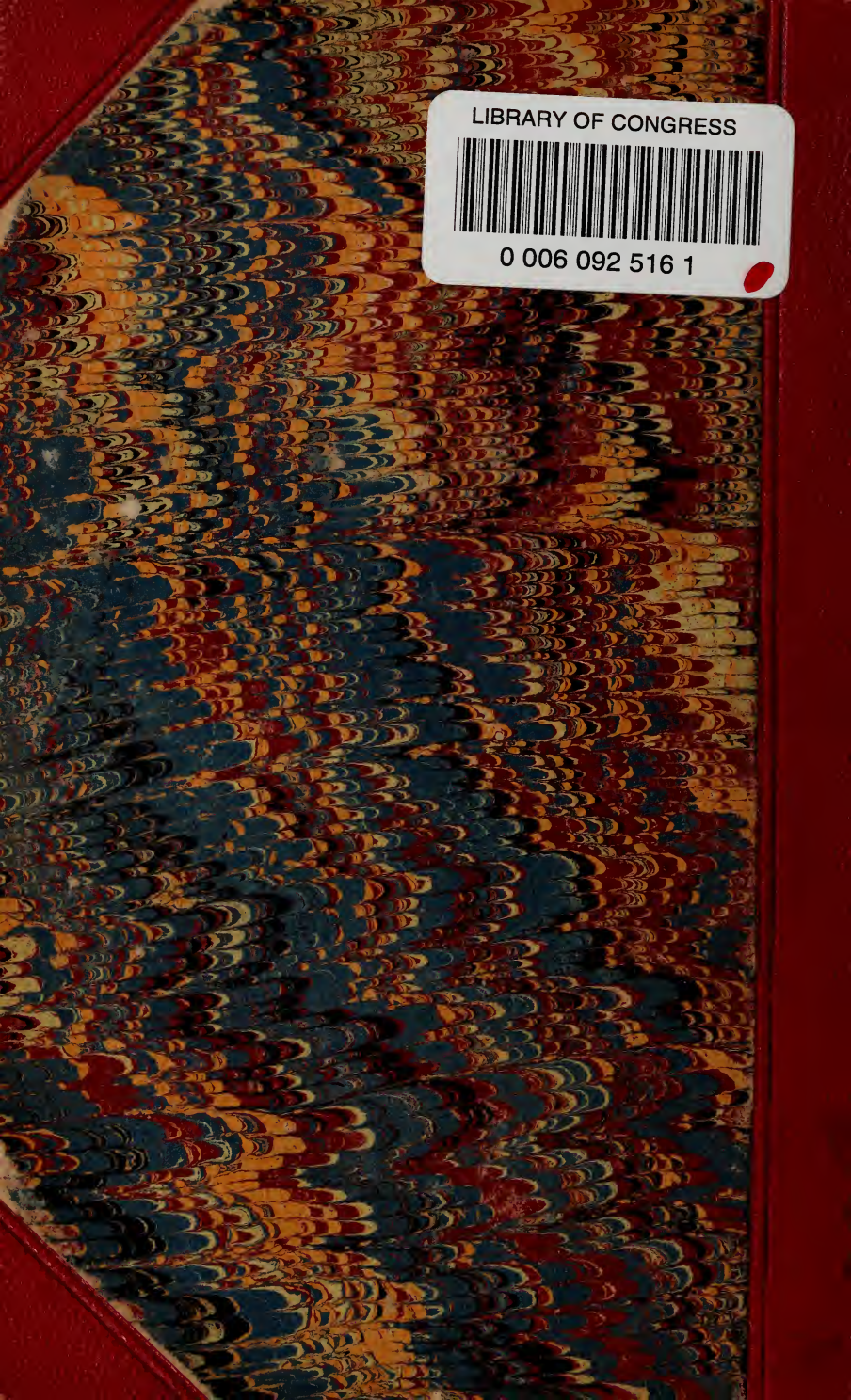
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